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The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation: Lutherans and Catholics Join in a Common Commemoration

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Germany celebrates Reformation Day every year on October 31, commemorating Luther's bold act of October 31, 1517, when he nailed 95 controversial theses on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg. This act is regarded as the starting point of the Reformation, a transformative happening that has become part of Germany's cultural identity. Even in the now vanished Communist East Germany, Luther was honoured as a bold revolutionary. In the parts of Germany with a majority Lutheran population, Reformation Day is a public holiday. While German Catholics respected this custom, they were also a little ill at ease—for the simple reason that Reformation Day celebrates the liberation of the German people from Roman Catholicism, which was deemed superstitious and oppressive. Yet decades of ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church have created a new spiritual climate. This year, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is being commemorated with the participation of the Catholic Church in Germany and other countries with a majority Lutheran population.

Allow me to make two incidental remarks related to this topic. German Protestants do not call their Church "the Lutheran Church" to avoid suggesting that Luther is the Church's founder. They habitually call their Church "die Evangelische Kirche," implying that Jesus Christ, not Luther, is the founder of their Church.

For Protestants in the English-speaking world, Reformation Day or Luther's bold act on October 31, 1517, is not a memory that defines their Christian identity, nor does it call for a yearly public commemoration. English-speaking Protestantism has been influenced by Anglicanism, Calvinism, Methodism, and

Contents

other Free Churches, for whom the specifically Lutheran Reformation had not been a founding event.

The report *From Conflict to Communion*

The joint commemoration of Reformation Day by the Lutheran and Catholic churches is an extraordinary historical event prepared by decades of ecumenical dialogue. Already in 1999, the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church published the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of the Justification of Faith,"[1] concluding that the two churches have "a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ." Over a decade later, the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity appointed a research committee representing the two traditions, asking it to work out the theological foundation for a joint commemoration of the quincentenary of the Reformation. The Report of this committee, entitled *From Conflict to Communion*, is a 100-page book published in German and English by Bonifatius Press (Leipzig, 2016). Fortunately, it is readily available on the internet. I found the book instructive, well-documented, exciting, and written in an easily readable style.

From Conflict to Communion reports, in its second chapter, the evolution that has taken place in Catholic historical scholarship on the thought and the person of Martin Luther. From writing tracts denouncing and caricaturing the German Reformer, Catholic historians and theologians of the 20th century have come to present Luther and the Reformation in a manner that agrees substantially with the work of Protestant scholars. The same chapter also reports the evolution of Protestant historical research on medieval Catholicism, discovering its internal pluralism, the presence of reform and renewal movements, in addition to the credulous popular piety denounced by Luther. Thanks to this evolution of scholarship, the authors of the Report (chapter 3) are able to tell, in manner acceptable to Protestants and Catholics, the essential story of the Reformation, beginning with the papal preaching of indulgences and Luther's 95 theses, passing through bitter exchanges between Luther and the ecclesiastical authorities, and ending up in Luther's burning of the papal excommunication and his mission to preach the Gospel as he saw it.

Because stubbornness and inflexibility marked the reactions on both sides, Protestants and Catholics regret and ask God's forgiveness for their angry words that created a culture of hatred and contempt, allowing political forces to produce conflicts that led to violent actions and eventually to the wars of religion.

Repentance is a dimension of Reformation Day, but not its substance, which is gratitude and praise. Protestants celebrate it as the entry into their freedom of the children of God, a joy that contemporary Catholics do not begrudge them. We read in the fourth chapter of the Report that Catholics have learned to acknowledge that Luther brought the Bible to the people and fostered a piety focused on Jesus Christ, pastoral practices that the Catholic Church of his day rejected, but that the Second Vatican Council appreciates and shares. These theological developments have made possible the joint participation of the two churches in the commemoration of the quincentenary of the Reformation.

The same chapter also examines the doctrinal differences between the two churches. It outlines the particular Protestant and Catholic concerns related to doctrines such as the Church, the Eucharist, the Ministry, Scripture and Tradition, and *simul justus et peccator*. There is hope that continued ecumenical dialogue will lead to ever wider agreements. No mention is made of the difference between Protestant and Catholic teaching on women and human sexuality.

The reception of the Report

The report *From Conflict to Communion* obtained the approval of the majority of the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. It was especially meaningful for the churches of northern Europe. The Swedish Lutheran Church invited Pope Francis to come to Sweden to participate in the commemoration of Reformation Day on October 31, 2016. On that occasion, in the cathedral of Lund, Francis and Bishop Munib Yunan, president of the Lutheran World Federation, signed a Joint Declaration[2] thanking God for the passage from conflict to communion between their two churches. The Finnish Lutheran Church sent an ecumenical delegation to visit the Pope on January 19, 2017, and the German Lutheran Church sent a similar delegation on February 6, 2017, inviting Francis to come to Germany and join the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The German Lutheran Church celebrates this quincentenary at Hildesheim in March, at the Wartburg Castle in May, and on October 31 at Wittenberg—all major public events to which representatives of the Catholic Church have been invited.

At Hildesheim in March, a unique event has taken place: a solemn worship service of reconciliation pre-

sided by Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, President of the Council of the German Protestant Church, and Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and President of the German Episcopal Conference. In their allocutions, the two church leaders spoke of the repentance and joy that filled the heart of Christians on this occasion: we repent of the past hard-heartedness and the history of hostility, and we are overjoyed that we have reached a point where we can give a common witness to Jesus Christ. Our two churches are no longer in competition with one another; they now give a common witness to the Gospel. Luther's emphasis on Jesus as Saviour and the Gospel as liberating is a message of pastoral relevance in both the churches. Despite the differences that still exist been the two churches, they are today engaged in a single mission in Germany and the world.

I read in a newspaper that the great ecumenical theologian Hans Küng has been critical of the worship of reconciliation at Hildesheim, What happened, he said, was just an exchange of words, words unable to dismantle the wall of separation. The Catholic Church, Küng said, still refuses to make significant pastoral concessions, such as permitting the sharing of the Eucharist or formally recognizing the ordained ministry in the Lutheran Church.

Pope Francis' acceptance of the Report

The Report *From Conflict to Communion* has been accepted by Pope Francis, as becomes clear in the Joint Declaration signed at Lund on October 31, 2016. Here are two paragraphs of this solemn document.

> Theological differences were accompanied by prejudice and conflicts, and religion was instrumentalized for political ends. Our common faith in Jesus Christ and our baptism demand of us a daily conversion, by which we cast off the historical disagreements and conflicts that impede the ministry of reconciliation. While the past cannot be changed, what is remembered and how it is remembered can be transformed. We pray for the healing of our wounds and of the memories that cloud our view of one another. We emphatically reject all hatred and violence, past and present, especially that expressed in the name of religion. Today, we hear God's command to set aside all conflict. We recognize that we are freed by grace to move towards the communion to which God continually calls us.
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> Many members of our communities yearn to receive the Eucharist at one table, as the concrete expression of full unity. We experience the pain of those who share their whole lives, but cannot share God's redeeming presence at the Eucharistic table. We acknowledge our joint pastoral responsibility to respond to the spiritual thirst and hunger of our people to be one in Christ. We long for this wound in the Body of Christ to be healed. This is the goal of our ecumenical endeavours, which we wish to advance, also by renewing our commitment to theological dialogue.

In his address to the Finnish Lutheran ecumenical delegation on January 19, 2017, Francis confirmed the commitment of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical journey with the Lutheran Church, aiming at the joint proclamation of the Christian Gospel. Here is a paragraph of his speech.

> 2017, the commemorative year of the Reformation, represents for Catholics and Lutherans a privileged occasion to live the faith more authentically, in order to rediscover the Gospel together, and to seek and witness to Christ with renewed vigour. At the conclusion of the day of commemoration in Lund, and looking to the future, we drew inspiration from our common witness to faith before the world, when we committed ourselves to jointly assisting those who suffer, who are in need, and who face persecution and violence. In doing so, as Christians we are no longer divided, but rather united on the journey towards full communion.

In his address to the German Lutheran delegation on February 6, 1017,[3] Francis confirmed the image of Luther drawn by *From Conflict to Communion.* Speaking to the Finnish delegation, he had already acknowledged that Luther's intention was to renew the Church, not to divide it. Addressing the German Lutheran delegation, Francis recalls that Luther's ardent preoccupation was the God question: 'How to find a merciful God?'—a passionate pursuit that guided and motivated his entire life and his pastoral effort to guide people "on the road to Christ." Putting Christ at the centre, Francis explains, is also the road taken today by the Catholic and the Lutheran churches in the ecumenical journey towards unity. Jointly commemorating the centenary of the Reformation is an occasion "to purify our memory," acknowledging our past failures before God, to celebrate the spiritual bond that unites, especially

baptism and faith in Jesus Christ, and to proclaim the saving Gospel to the world together.

Recalling the Joint Declaration of Lund, Francis again recognizes that painful experience of couples in mixed marriages, prevented as they are from receiving communion together. He hopes that the ongoing ecumenical dialogue will lead to a more generous pastoral policy based on the identical baptism and the common march towards visible unity. He does not mention that the Decree of Ecumenism of Vatican Council II, in a paragraph on "communicatio in sacris," had already opened the door to occasional intercommunion from a Catholic perspective.[4] Shared communion, Francis said to the German delegation, would be a meaningful symbol of reconciliation in today's world, increasingly divided and torn apart by the dark forces of human sinfulness.

Like the report, Francis makes no reference to the teaching on marriage, women, and human sexuality that presently divides the Lutheran and the Catholic churches. I find this regrettable. For the official Catholic teaching on issues such as divorce, abortion, and homosexuality uses a vocabulary suggesting that disagreement with them is produced by contempt for truth or hedonistic self-involvement, completely forgetting that the Lutheran and other Christian churches disagree with the Catholic teaching on theological grounds. An urgent ecumenical task of the Catholic Church, it seems to me, is to find a responsible manner of articulating its teaching on marriage, women, and human sexuality, one that expresses respect for the churches that interpret the Gospel differently. This was demanded by the Decree on Ecumenism, par. 23: "While it is true that many Christians understand the moral teaching of the Gospel differently from Catholics, and do not accept the same solutions to the more difficult problems of modern society, nevertheless they share our desire to stand by the words of Christ as the source of Christian virtue."

Since the ecumenical accord between the Lutheran and the Catholic Church puts great emphasis on the love of neighbour, the practice of social justice, and solidarity with refugees and the poor, the year-long public celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation may have a certain political influence in Germany and even have a bearing on the election of the chancellor in September 2017.

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1 See Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Dialogue with Lutheran World Federation, Oct. 31, 1999.

2 http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/full-text-joint-declaration-for-the-500th-anniversary-of-reformation (accessed April 29, 2017).

3 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170206_chiesa-evangelica.html (accessed April 29, 2017).

4 "There are two main principles governing the practice of common worship (communicatio in sacris): first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace. Witness to the unity of the Church in general forbids common worship to Christians, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice." The Decree on Ecumenism, paragraph 8.

Theology in a Secular University: Still Room for the Transcendent[1]

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Concordia University is a public, comprehensive university in Montreal. It is one of three Quebec universities where English is the main instructional language. In the 2014–15 academic year, Concordia had slightly more than 46,000 students. It is an enormous institution housing four faculties, over 300 undergraduate programs, and 100 graduate programs. Diversity is part of Concordia's DNA. It is astonishing to walk into the Henry Hall Building at noon and experience the dynamic of thousands of students in motion: the energy is exhilarating. The eclecticism of the students and faculty is immediately clear, and in locations throughout the two campuses there is evidence of a remarkable religious diversity. Many students are from immigrant families and are the first generation to attend university. They are raised in deeply religious families and come to higher education in Montreal with a sensibility strongly influenced by the historical situatedness that surrounds them—both religious and secular horizons of value. Others have roots in the strictly secular sensibility of modern Quebec that so profoundly influenced their parents, yet fail to carry the same trace of resentment toward religion that continues to occupy their parents. Religion is mostly outside their sphere of influence; their attitude is one of curious neutrality.

Canadian theologian Bernard Lonergan defines the role of theology as mediating "between a cultural matrix and the significance of a religion in that matrix."[2] Yet, what is the role of theology in the matrix of a secular university with students from multiple religious faiths or from no religious faith at all? Concordia University's Department of Theological Studies is in such a unique position, facing questions from inside and outside the department about its identity in such a cultural matrix. The roots of the department can be traced to Loyola College, before it merged with Sir George Williams University. Loyola College's roots were Roman Catholic and Jesuit, and its original clientele was rooted in this tradition. In 1974, the merging of the two institutions was a consequence of a shifting vision that the Quiet Revolution brought to Quebec, a vision that sought to secularize Quebec's education system. More than 40 years later, the department of Theological Studies continues to thrive in a secular university. How is this so? Most courses offered by the department are taught based on the claims of the Abrahamic religions, particularly Christianity. Respecting these traditions, and in some cases reaching beyond, an ecumenical orientation has necessarily developed as faculty within the department paid attention to the changing background and questions of their students.

The intent of this paper is to elaborate on this unique situation. The paper draws on the experience of professors in the Department of Theological Studies, all of whom have been part of ongoing dialogue to comprehend and implement the role of theology in a secular context. It also draws on the experiences of students who have studied or are currently studying at Concordia, either taking courses from or registered in theology programs. The insights are not the product of a quantitative methodological study, but rather the result of reflection on experience: the experience of academics who have taught and conducted research in this unique department for almost 20 years.

Classroom experience: A diversity of dialogue

Imagine teaching a graduate course titled "Method in Theology" to 12 students. On the first day of classes, students are asked to introduce themselves, sharing where they are in relation to the master's program and how they would articulate their theological question. In listening, a remarkable scenario is encountered. The students range from age 25 to 75. Eight of these students identify as Christian. Two are from the Roman Catholic tradition. One of them is young, having just completed his bachelor degree. He graduated from a Jesuit high school. The other is a retired oncologist who always wanted to study theology and hopes to write his thesis on end-of-life narrative. Four students have an Evangelical background; two of them are pastors. Another student is from the United Church tradition, and one other is studying for the priesthood in the Anglican Church. This student received special permission from her theological college to take her master's degree with our department. Also astonishing is to see a well-known rabbi from the Orthodox tradition, who decided to do a master's de-

gree in theology at Concordia. The remaining three do not identify with any religious tradition. One of these students was raised in the Muslim tradition, but she does not currently identify as Muslim. She identifies as agnostic. She is a high school teacher and is studying theology part-time. Her theological questions are connected to the questions of her high school students: they have prompted her own restless wonderings. Another student has a philosophical orientation but wants to explore questions of a theological nature, which he is not permitted to do in a Philosophy department. He also identifies as agnostic. A third speaks of her interest in exploring the academic discipline of spirituality, but not from within an exclusive religious tradition. Her desire is to open her exploration beyond the confines of religion. As each one speaks about his or her program, you realize that their theological questions are as diverse as their backgrounds.

The master's program in the Department of Theological Studies began in the mid-1990s. It started small, with two or three students, but quickly grew. Between 2009 and 2014, the department averaged between 45 and 63 registered MA students. The master's program has consistently drawn students from diverse backgrounds who bring to their studies life experiences and questions that enrich the department exponentially. The intermixing of such varied backgrounds creates a richer, deeper environment for both students and professors. Seminar discussions are often striking and dynamic.

Registration in the department's undergraduate programs is small. It is difficult to attract students to choose theological studies as a first option for their major. Most students have little understanding of what theology is, and students are usually attracted to it after they have taken one or two courses. They are turned on by theological questions and will then decide to transfer their major, take a double major, or add theology as a minor. Most undergraduate students come to the department through the back door. Still, the number of undergraduate students counted in Concordia University statistics as theology students does not rise, because Concordia only officially (and statistically) acknowledges students as belonging to a department when they choose the program as their first option at the beginning of their undergraduate programs. Many of our courses are extremely popular. We have two online introductory courses. One is Introduction to Christian Origins, which, at its largest, has registered over 800 students. The second is Introduction to Christian Ethics, which has had over 400 students enrolled at one time. A third online course, Celtic Christianity, also does very well. In-class introductory courses, Introduction to Theological Studies, Introduction to Biblical Studies, Introduction to New Testament, and Introduction to Christian Spirituality also attract large numbers of students, sometimes over 150 of them.

Students love some courses that might be considered *au courant*: for example, Theology and Film; The Creative Self; Theology and Art; The Icon: Theology in Colour; Theology and Myth; Religion and Politics; Indigenous Spirituality; Pilgrim Bodies, Sacred Journeys; and Revelation, Faith and Reason. There is great student diversity in these classes: the courses attract students from Engineering, John Molson School of Business, and Fine Arts, and students across the spectrum of the Faculty of Arts and Science (Humanities, Social Science, and Science). As we get to know our students, we get a glimpse of their eclectic backgrounds—Hindu, First Nations, Muslim, Jewish, Agnostic, Atheist, Buddhist, and, of course, Christian. We try to make the most of this diverse, rich background by engaging students in class discussion.

Why theological studies in a secular university?

It is not possible, within the limits of this article, to exhaustively describe the encounter that defines Concordia's Department of Theological Studies. What follows simply intends to convey glimpses of the experience encountered.

Deep Personal Questions

Teaching (and research, for that matter) in the department aims at holding in tension the dialectic between serious scholarship and critical thinking, and profound respect for one's religious tradition and encouraging students to pursue their spiritual or religious quest.[3] Our department, as faculty member Brian McDonough asserts, "considers the spiritual quest to be worthy of serious academic inquiry, and as such, requiring methodological tools and rigour. Because it takes the spiritual quest seriously, the department strives to remain radically open to the multiple forms of human engagement with the Transcendent Other."

Following intuitively the founding tradition of Ignatius of Loyola, we strive to teach the whole person. We do not ask our students to ignore the existential

dimension of their persons that pushes them to ask questions of ultimate value and meaning. We encourage their simmering questions. We stoke the fire to celebrate their curiosity and wonder that finds expression in their questions. Teaching is about facilitating students getting insights into what is being communicated. It requires attentiveness and reflection. We profoundly respect, acknowledge, and continually animate the ongoing process of students as they navigate university-level studies. We take seriously their own contribution to this process. We do not magically transfer information from our minds to theirs. We teach to whole human beings animated by their own curiosity and wonder. We seek to open students to their inner resources and to their authentic selves seeking truth and value. Theological Studies dares to do this in a secular university where many still see theology as a remnant from the past, as a department that teaches catechism to children. This profound ignorance of the added value our department brings to Concordia University stems from a bias that reduces the human person.

Two faculty members express it this way:

> Even at the same time as schools of business and faculties of engineering are overflowing with students, there has been an admittedly, much smaller, but still, important growth in the number of students who, once exposed to theological studies, find in it something valuable for their life and learning. (Matthew R. Anderson)

> With the ebbing of formal religious authority and formation in postmodernity, students often do not have the experience or even the vocabulary to inquire into the questions that most deeply animate them. Theology allows them the opportunity to explore humanity's – and their own – existential questions while discovering rigorous intellectual traditions that offer tools for thinking through and living out the human quest for meaning, and values, and identity without artificially truncating their inquiry according to an arbitrarily materialist worldview. (Sara Terreault)

Challenging the dominant paradigms

One of the courses I teach in the department is Indigenous Spirituality. What is striking about this course, and why it is at home in our department, is that Indigenous worldview sees the human person as integrated: body, mind, heart, and spirit. Indigenous worldview is an integrated worldview. Indigenous research does not separate what can be seen and touched, measured and circumscribed from what cannot be seen: that is, the spiritual world, the world of the heart, and the interconnectedness between all beings. In a similar manner, theology challenges dominant paradigms of some fields of study: for example, empiricism and positivism. Current respect for Indigenous worldview is now inviting and welcoming into the academy other methodologies and other types of knowing. Theological Studies is well placed in this new and open environment, since it has always organized itself this way. When taking our courses, students are often astonished that they are allowed to reflect on their own experience. They are initially lost when given permission to trust their own capacity to intelligently reflect on what they notice from their experience. They are exhilarated when they grasp and are affirmed in the unique value their reflection brings to class discussion and in their writing.

> Perhaps the small growth in interest in Theological Studies is a natural correlation to the vastly greater increase in STEM (Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics) fields, its 'balance', as it were. It may also be that we, like philosophy, fine arts and liberal arts or literature programs, represent an alternative, for the creatively minded, to the reigning paradigm of customer and consumer, and so an alternative to the uncritical positivism of some fields of study. It may also be (one hopes) that more and more people are seeing, or at least sensing, that techno-scientific language is sometimes, when coming from governments or corporations, not really all that scientific, and can hide an ideological bias as strong as any other form of 'church'. (Matthew R Anderson)

Growth and development of faculty and department

Concordia University, like many other institutes of higher learning, is vigorously promoting interdisciplinary research and teaching. This promotion is integrated in many areas of Concordia's Strategic Directions. Theological Studies is intrinsically interdisciplinary, with our five areas of specialization: scripture, history, systematic theology, ethics, and spirituality. For the most part, our faculty has worked together and, as Lucian Turcescu mentions, we "appreciate each other's work."

One of our foundational MA courses, as mentioned above, is Method in Theology. In this course, we explore with our graduate students the different methodologies operative in the academic discipline of theology. We also help students come to understand what each contributes to the overarching field of theology. Each specialty contributes to the larger enterprise; our master's students come to understand this well—not only because of this required graduate course, but also from the collaboration in which our faculty engages. It is common for faculty members to work together on research projects: for example, the Bible and ethics; pilgrimage and Indigenous spirituality; Luther and Kristeva. Similarly, some of our courses are cross-listed because of their interdisciplinary nature: Celtic Christianity with the Centre for Irish Studies; Religion and Politics with the Department of Political Science; and Indigenous Spirituality with the First Peoples' program.

Another key component of the growth and development of the department and faculty is related to pedagogy. Sara Terreault expresses this well:

> Our Faculty have a robust transdisciplinary formation and are particularly skilled in presenting both traditional and innovative intellectual currents in such a way that helps students cultivate skills for sharp attention to data, intelligent interpretation of data, critical reflection on that interpretation and responsible deployment of the knowledge thus gained. The faculty in our department is dedicated to creative engaged pedagogy, supplementing traditional teaching methods with innovative fieldwork, arts-based and land-based inquiry and strong mentoring and support for students' conference presentations and publication.

As already indicated, our faculty members are vigilant to the emerging trends within the University and the broader community. We seek to engage in both. In May 2017, inspired and led by our current chair, Marie-France Dion, we hosted a series of events we titled "Theology in the City" to celebrate Montreal's 375th birthday, the 100th birthday of Loyola College, and 50 years since Expo 67. We are also celebrating 500 years since the Reformation. With these events, we sought to showcase the interdisciplinary nature of theological studies and the department's engagement with the beautiful and dynamic city of Montreal. Among the events planned were public lectures, two academic conferences, a labyrinth, a street play, music from the Reformation period, choirs, a Luther pub night, an art exhibit, and an open house. Faculty and students worked together to bring about an amazing week to celebrate theology in the city.

Conclusion

> All of which is to say that theological studies is unique at Concordia in not being tied to any specific denomination, or even, arguably, religion, but at the same time, being an entry-point for a type of reflection and discussion badly needed in our society. (Matthew R. Anderson)

Theological Studies is a small department (six full-time faculty and approximately 12 part-time faculty) in Concordia University, an academic institution that is the heir of two distinctive traditions. Sir George Williams, the English philanthropist and devoted Protestant who founded the YMCA, is one of the visionaries in whom Concordia University roots its identity. The other, as mentioned earlier, is Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit college founded in his name. While some try to shake off what they consider the burden of remnants of the past, Theology and Indigenous Studies understand the importance of remembering the roots and the vision that produced today's amazing flourishing. Theology is one of those roots, whether glimpsed in the philanthropic work of Sir George Williams or the intellectual rigour of Ignatius of Loyola. Both understood that social justice and the common good are the goals of intellectual pursuit. These roots are evidenced in the outstanding research and academic programs that make up Concordia University. These are the roots that animate theology and through which theology contributes to the larger strategic vision of Concordia University.

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1 I would like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, for their thoughtful and insightful feedback to my request for their input for this article. While I take responsibility for the paper in its final form, the topic is one that our full-time and part-time faculty have grappled with over the years—at times harmoniously, at other times not so much. Yet, we continue to reflect and dialogue on our unique situation, knowing full well that the challenges will continue. I thank Paul Allen, Matthew R. Anderson, Marie-France Dion, Brian McDonough, Sara Terreault, and Lucian Turcescu.

2 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) p. xi.

3 I thank Lucian Turcescu for articulating this insight.

Religion and Human Rights

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History was made on September 15, 2017, when the first-ever Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions was unveiled at the Palais des congrès in Montreal.[1]

One needs to know more about the relationship between religion and human rights in order to grasp the full historical significance of this event.

The relationship between religion and human rights has been a complex one. If one goes by the current views in the matter, especially as expressed in popular journalism, religion and human rights should be viewed as antithetical to each other. The impression one forms is that religion is a major source of oppression in the world, from which the discourse on human rights is designed to free us. This perception, though popular, takes a rather limited view of the relationship. For one, it overlooks the fact that the religious background of the people involved in drafting the document played an active role in shaping the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as documented by Mary Ann Glendon in her book *The World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2001), wherein she demonstrates the role played by the religious backgrounds of the members of the drafting committee, such as P. Chang. Other scholars, such as Sumner B Twiss, have further pursued this line of inquiry (see Wm Theodore de Bary and Tu Weiming, *Confucianism and Human Rights* [1998], p. 41). Moreover, both religious discourse and human rights discourse ultimately address the question of human flourishing. And it can be argued that just as human rights discourse can make a valuable contribution to religious discourse, religious discourse could make a contribution to human rights discourse in a similar way.

I would like to particularly explore this last possibility in the rest of this article.

This possibility that religions could be a resource for human rights was examined in some detail by the Project on Religion and Human Rights, an initiative launched in 1993 in New York. The project concluded with a conference in May 1994 on the Dialogue on Religion and Human Rights. Suggestions were invited, during the last session of the conference, on how the work initiated by the project could be continued beyond the life of the project. It was then that I made the suggestion for the first time that perhaps the religions of the world could come together to draft a Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World Religions, which would embody their own vision of human flourishing in the idiom of human rights. The suggestion was warmly received, and the first opportunity to test the waters arose when a World Conference on Human Rights met in Montreal from December 7 to 9, 1998, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations, and the first draft to such a proposed declaration was released at this conference in English and French.

Thereafter, the draft declaration went through many subsequent revisions, extensions, modifications, and so on for almost two decades, during the course of which it was vetted at several conferences: at Chapman University in Orange, California (1999); at Chapman University and Loyola Marymount University (2000); at the World Congress of the International Association of the History of Religions (IAHR) at Durban (2000); at the House of World Cultures, Berlin (2001); at the UNESCO Conference, Barcelona (2001); and at a conference held in Malaysia (2002).

It then became the theme around which three global conferences were organized in 2006, 2011, and 2016 on World's Religions After September 11. These conferences met at the Palais des congrès in Montreal and were attended by over 2,000, 3,000, and 1,000 delegates respectively. The draft of the proposed declaration was a subject of discussion at all of them, and a final text was formally adopted on September 15, 2016, in Montreal, at the conclusion of the third global conference. This brought to a conclusion an initiative of which five Nobel Peace laureates were Patrons: The Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Madame Shirin Ebadi, Bishop Belo of Timor Leste, and Professor Elie Wiesel.

One might wonder what contribution religions might make to the discourse on human rights. Two points immediately emerge when the declaration adopted by the world's religions is compared to the one adopted by the UN, and these differences night help us answer the

question. The UN document does not provide for the right to food, at least directly, with the grotesque if not obscene consequence that if a person were to be arrested without a warrant, then the victim could mobilize human rights machinery for relief, but a victim of famine, who was dying from hunger, is not in a position do so. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions rectifies the situation.

Similarly, Article 18 of the UN declaration endows a person with the right to change their religion, but contains no such specific provision to retain it. This last point is often overlooked in the discourse on human rights. Indeed, it has been overlooked to such an extent that the Western idea of religious liberty does not recognize this right to retain one's religion, and a mention of it even produces puzzlement. This is so because the regnant notion of religion in the West assumes that all religions are, or ought to be, missionary in the sense that they seek converts. This could be due to the emphasis placed on proselytizing in the two religions that cover half the population of the globe: namely, Christianity and Islam. A missionary conception of religion is perhaps also reinforced by the free trade model in economics; spreading one's religion then becomes akin to free trade, which involves selling one's products all over the world.

The point that one should be as free to retain one's religion as to spread it is not unimportant from the point of view of at least the following religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto, Judaism, and primal religions. These religions are not proselytizing religions, and therefore for them, the freedom of religion consists not so much in the freedom to change one's religion as in the freedom to retain one's religion in the face of attempts by the proselyting religions to convert them. In other words, freedom from conversion is as important a constituent of religious freedom as freedom for conversion, a point that does not seem to have been covered adequately in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). This has also been rectified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions, whose full text is available at www.worldsreligions2016.org.

I hope these examples illustrate how the dialogue between religious discourse and human rights discourse can be useful, and I further hope that they will spur us to pursue such dialogue further.

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1 http://gcwr2011.org/pdf/UDHRWR_en.pdf (accessed on April 27, 2017).

Yes to Boycotting Israeli Products

Guy Durand
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The Ecumenist *is publishing this article, a revised version of Guy Durand's French article in* Le Devoir *of March 22, 2017, because its topic, the boycott of Israeli products, has been vigorously debated within the Christian churches.*

On February 22, 2017, the House of Commons condemned the boycott movement of Israel (BDS – Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions). In an article in *The Globe and Mail* of February 23, Patrick Martin reports the arguments given in the parliamentary debate that favoured this condemnation: i) the Boycott is linked to Hamas, thus aiming at the destruction of Israel, ii) the Boycott blames Israel one-sidedly for the present conflict, and iii) the Boycott advocates the return of the refugees, an event that would make Palestinians the majority and stop Israel from being a Jewish State. Let me respond to these claims.

The Boycott is not linked to Hamas

The BDS is not linked to Hamas; it originated in the West Bank and concerned all Palestinians. Moreover, it is supported by numerous and diverse groups in the West: labour unions, artists, universities, churches, and political parties. It includes Jews both inside and outside universities, in Israel and around the world. John Kerry asked for the suspension of the boycott action in 2012 to prevent it from interfering with negotiations in process at that time. In January 2014, he mentioned the serious possibility of associating with it and of calling for a widespread economic boycott if the peace negotiations did not advance.

From another angle, the *Palestinian Authority* recognized the State of Israel as part of the Oslo Accords in 1993. On April 23, 2014, after seven years of tension between the two Palestinian parties, Hamas accepted the creation of a Government of Union with the Palestinian Authority, thus implicitly recognizing the State of Israel. The next day, Israel broke off the peace negotiations.

The burden of fault rests on Israel

Realistically, provocations come from both sides: 1) On the Palestinian side: knifings, rock throwing, suicide attacks, homemade rockets launched from Gaza, etc. 2) On the Jewish side: violence on the part of the occupiers in the destruction of olive groves and of homes; in the occupation of lands; in pervasive control of movement, in arrests and imprisonments; in the sealing off of Gaza, and in armed response, assault tanks, missiles fired—read 'a disproportionate use of force in reaction,' explicitly advocated by the Israeli authorities.

Additionally, in analyzing each negotiation attempt, one can recognize mistakes on both sides, but it is difficult not to place the burden of fault on Israel when one looks at its politics on the ground and the statements of its authorities. 1) On the ground, it's clear: Since the 1949 war, Israel has expanded its territory by 50%. Again, during the Six-Day War in 1967. Then again, during construction of the Wall of Separation between 2002 and 2005. Since the election of Trump in the United States, occupation of new lands in the West Bank continues, as does the creation of new colonies. 2) This political action, far from being sporadic, is justified by the will to create the Great Israel, a uniquely Jewish state, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. This will has been evident for years. From 1948, in fact, Ben-Gurion affirmed, "The acceptance of partition does not commit us to renounce the West Bank: we are not asking that anyone give up his vision. We shall accept a state in the boundaries fixed today, but the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are the concern of the Jewish people and no external factor will be able to limit them." Other prime ministers have reaffirmed this idea, notably Menachem Begin in 1967, and especially Benjamin Netanyahu over the past 18 years. It is, moreover, the ideological base of the Likud, founded in 1973. Its electoral platform in 2006, and again in 2009, states even more explicitly the following objective: "The government of Israel categorically rejects the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state to the west of the Jordan. The Palestinians may lead their lives freely under the framework of self-governance, but not as an independent and sovereign state. … The establishment [of settlements] is the expression of an irrefutable right of the Jewish people to manage the land of Israel and it constitutes an important asset in the defense of the principal interests of the state of Israel. The

Likud is bound to reinforce and develop these communities and is opposed to their dismantling. … Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of the state of Israel and only the state of Israel."

Not aimed at the destruction of Israel

A third argument put forward in the debate claimed that the BDS movement aims to destroy Israel because it proposes the return of all refugees—descendants of the Palestinian refugees of the 1947–49 war, estimated to be about six million. This would bring the Palestinians to a majority in Israel and mark the end of Israel as a "Jewish State." Yet, the objective of the Boycott movement regarding the return of refugees states explicitly that this return would occur "within the guidelines of a United Nations Resolution," which calls for actual return OR financial compensation. All this without calling into question the existence of Israel.

Furthermore, since the aim of the Boycott is to force Israel to the negotiating table and make appropriate compromises, one should support the Boycott, even if one does not agree with every objective expressed by the founders of BDS or by certain of its members.

Reasons for the Boycott

The Canadian Policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see the website of External Affairs) supports the Palestinians right to a territorially contiguous State adjacent to Israel and denies the legality of the occupation of Palestinian lands by Israeli settlers. The Canadian Policy is therefore a good reason for supporting the Boycott aimed at forcing Israel to the negotiation table and the acceptance of compromises, even if one does not agree with every objective proposed by individual members of the movement.

The Boycott is, in fact, an ethical, peaceful, and democratic way to put pressure on Israel, as Rachad Antonius explained in a letter in *Le Devoir* in February 2016. It is often quite effective. And the more widespread the boycott, the more effective it is. Consequently, it should be supported by all citizens who love justice and encouraged by associations and governments.

The present Boycott is not only concerned with agricultural or manufactured goods, but also with cultural, university, and sports exchanges, such as the refusal to sing there or to participate in academic conferences. While a distinction is sometimes made between Israeli products from the occupied territories and those of Israel itself, I personally hold, for the sake of increasing its political impact, that the boycott should apply equally to products originating in either of the two territories. Pro-peace associations should alert us as to which products to boycott, and progressive Jews should join us in great number. Let me add that, regrettably, no similar boycott has been organized to support human rights in other 'delinquent' countries.

I conclude that the House of Commons should reverse its motion against the Boycott, voted on February 22, 2016—a motion that opposes the freedom of expression, limits the right of citizens to organized protests, and prohibits an important mode of obliging Israel to negotiate and recognize a Palestinian State.

One can be a friend of Israel and at the same time criticize its political policies regarding the Palestinians. In the present situation, as in so many others, our silence makes us accomplices. "The world is a dangerous place to live," wrote Albert Einstein, "not so much because of those who do evil, but because of those who stand by and let it happen."

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Jules Isaac: The Jewish Conscience of the Church

By Gregory Baum
Centre justice et foi, Montréal, Québec

The following is Gregory Baum's Preface to The Jewish Conscience of the Church: Jules Isaac and the Second Vatican Council *(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).*

I am grateful to Norman Tobias for this outstanding biography of the French historian Jules Isaac, the Jewish scholar who set off a theological movement in the Catholic Church and influenced the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). This valuable book is more than a biography since its major part offers a detailed study of the theological and exegetical debates stirred up among Catholics by Jules Isaac's provocative intervention. This remarkable man, almost unknown in North America, was well-known in France as the author of the history books used in the public schools in the interwar years. Thanks to this reputation, he was listened to in France in 1948 when he published the book *Jésus et Israël*, analyzing and denouncing the anti-Jewish discourse of Christian preaching almost from its beginning. His voice was given added weight by the tragedy that had befallen his family: his wife Laure, the younger of his two sons, his daughter and son-in-law, arrested in 1943, had been sent to the death camps in the East. One son of his survived. Absent from his lodgings at the time, Jules Isaac had not been caught. Hidden by friends, he survived the war, and as a survivor he spoke with authority of Jewish suffering.

Reading *Jésus et Israël* in 1957 had a profound impact on my own life. A student in Switzerland, I had just attained my doctorate in Catholic theology at the University of Fribourg with a thesis on an ecumenical topic, when I received an invitation from a theological society to give a number of lectures on the Catholic Church's relation to Judaism and the Jews. I had never thought about this issue. I was brought up as a Christian, but my grandparents had been Jewish, a fact that should have made me sensitive to this issue, but I was quite ignorant. Turning to the writings of the Church Fathers, the Christian authors of antiquity, I now repeated their theological proposals that the old Israel, the Jews, had been displaced by the new Israel, the Church, and that by refusing to believe in Jesus, the Jews, the first-chosen people, had incurred their rejection by God, a destiny anticipated in the ancient Scriptures by the divine election of the younger son over the older one, Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau. I repeated these and other traditional fables, without any awareness of the cultural impact and the social consequences of this theological discourse. I was as blind as the Church itself.

Isaac's book *Jésus et Israël* opened my eyes. More than that, the book deeply troubled me; it shook the foundation upon which I had built my life. I felt that I could remain a Catholic theologian only if I dedicated myself to the reform of the Church's teaching on the Jews and Judaism. I wrote *The Jews and the Gospel*, a book in which I denounced with Jules Isaac the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the Christian tradition and, at the same time, disagreed with the French scholar on one issue. In none of its passages, I argued, did the New Testament itself foster contempt for the Jews. The anti-Jewish sounding verses cited by Jules Isaac I interpreted differently, thus changing their meaning. The point I wanted to prove was that the hostility to Jews and their religion was introduced not by the New Testament, but by the post-biblical Christian tradition. Ten years later, when Rosemary Ruether asked me to write the introduction to her *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Antisemitism*, I actually changed my mind: I sorrowfully agreed with Jules Isaac and Rosemary Ruether that there were verses in the New Testament that reflected the conflict between the Church and the Synagogue and expressed hostility to Jews.

Altogether remarkable is that Jules Isaac's discovery of the Christian roots of antisemitism did not make him resentful. He did not see himself as an opponent of the Christian religion. On the contrary, he surrounded himself with a circle of Christian and Jewish friends, founded the association *l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, and joined the small movement in the Church that sought to purify Christian preaching of the anti-Jewish rhetoric. He did not designate himself as a believer, neither Jewish nor Christian; reading him, I came to think of him as a spiritual humanist with sympathy for the ethical ideals of biblical religion.

In his biography Norman Tobias sheds light on Jules Isaac's generous approach to Catholicism, despite its intolerance and its prejudices. The biography documents the great friendship between the young Isaac and the famous Charles Péguy, Catholic poet and French patriot, killed as a soldier in the First World War. In Péguy's life and his writings the young Isaac discovered an alternative Catholicism, at odds with the Catholic establishment, a spiritual Catholicism that embraced the republican values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. I remember that North American Catholics in the 1940s and 50s read Charles Péguy in English translation with great admiration as a prophet of a renewed Catholicism, humanistic and politically progressive. Isaac's friendship with Péguy, beginning in 1897, introduced him to an interpretation of the Christian tradition for which he, a Jewish French republican, had great sympathy. Decades later, when he discovered the seeds of antisemitism in the history of Christian preaching, the memory of Péguy may have convinced him that, despite this destructive past, Christian charity was meant to transcend all boundaries and embrace the Jews faithful to the Synagogue and that therefore Jewish-Christian reconciliation is a perfectly realistic objective.

Jules Isaac and some Jewish friends joined the small movement of Protestant and Catholic Christians that sought to purify the Church's teaching of its anti-Jewish bias. After the Holocaust these Christians recognized, not without sorrow and shame, that the Church's preaching had created over the centuries negative images of the Jews and their religion, a cultural inheritance that was exploited by the promoters of racist antisemitism in the 19th and 20th centuries, culminating in the Jewish genocide committed by Nazi Germany.

In August 1947 Jules Isaac, accompanied by some Jewish friends, attended the week-long conference at Seelisberg in Switzerland, at which the Christian participants produced a program of 10 points that, if adopted by the Churches, would eliminate the anti-Jewish bias associated with Christian teaching. The history of this small reform movement, to which the Churches paid little attention at the time, has been carefully documented in John Connelly's *From Enemies to Brothers: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews*. This small reform movement was to exert a powerful influence fifteen years later upon the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

In 1959 Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council. In June 1960 Jules Isaac, an old man by that time, was received by Pope John in a private audience at which the Jewish sage pleaded for the reform of Christian teaching on the Jews. In response, Pope John promised to see to it that the upcoming Council would express the Church's respect for Judaism and the Jews. In fact, the Pope asked the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, whose primary task was to foster the ecumenical movement, to produce a draft document that would redefine the Church's relationship to the Jews. By a curious coincidence, because of my doctoral work in ecumenism, I had been appointed an official consultant (*peritus*) at the Secretariat. I now became the member of the small team of theologians appointed to make proposals for correcting the Church's hostile discourse on the Jews. We paid attention to the writings of Jules Isaac, the 10 points of Seelisberg, and the studies produced by the above-mentioned reform movement: their insights, overlooked or discarded in the past, now became the cornerstone of the Church's teaching. After long debate, occasional setbacks and some compromises, the Second Vatican Council promulgated *Nostra aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, including in chapter four the statement on the Jews and Judaism that echoed the ideas Jules Isaac had passionately promoted and that Catholic theologians had made their own.

The author of this biography has himself been affected by the spirit of Jules Isaac. With him Norman Tobias, a believing Jew, is deeply disturbed by the Church's antisemitic utterances, however implicit; at the same time he is not resentful. He shows great sympathy for the Church's effort to reform its teaching on the Jews. Tobias is thankful that the Church at the Second Vatican Council has expressed its respect for the Jews as God's first-chosen people in an eternally valid divine covenant. Jules Isaac had grasped a universal principle when he recognized that religions evolve and reform themselves by the insights and spiritual vitality of their own members, and that he, as an outsider, could have influence on Catholicism only if he initiated, and participated in, a reform movement within the Church.

Today some Muslims unhappy with the intolerance of radical Islam leave their religion and write angry books against it, hoping that their accusations will be heard and foster a more generous attitude. Secular critics of Islam often think likewise that their complaints will be heard and foster Islam's openness to modernity. They do not recognize Jules Isaac's insight that religions reform themselves from within their faith through the religious

aspirations of their members, and that outsiders can have an influence only if they associate themselves with a reform movement within the religion. Angry voices from the outside will have no hearing. For an entire century a wide network of religious thinkers in Islam, believing intellectuals in East and West, have promoted the reform of their tradition, supporting human rights and respect for religious pluralism. Since their work is not well-known, I engage myself with a good number of Christian theologians to give their work greater visibility in the public realm. We read the writings of these Muslim thinkers, engage in dialogue with them, and foster the public recognition of their renewal movements. Reading this biography of Jules Isaac has made me aware that our activity is resonant of his wisdom.

The Crucifixion of Fethullah Gülen

By Gregory Baum
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I am appalled by the absurd accusation of Turkey's president, Mr. R.T. Erdogan, claiming that the Muslim sage Fethullah Gülen was the instigator of the military putsch of July 2016. It is public knowledge that the coup d'état to replace Erdogan's rule had been staged by a group within the military. Their badly organized enterprise was quickly stopped by military units loyal to the President. The ensuing violence killed 300 people and injured over 2,000. Very quickly, without investigation and without evidence, Erdogan put the blame for the military putsch on the spiritual leader Fethullah Gülen and launched punitive measures against members of the humanitarian Gülen Movement, also known as Hizmet—vast numbers of men and women working in educational institutions, hospitals, publishing companies, government departments, social work agencies, and as lawyers and judges in the court system. Hundreds of these people were put in prison, and thousands were dismissed from their jobs. As of March 8, 128,625 people were fired from their jobs, 94,224 people detained, and 46,875 people arrested.[1] Erdogan used the failed coup to punish his political critics who accused his government of corruption and blamed him for seeking increasingly dictatorial power, betraying Turkish democracy. In fact, in an April 2017 referendum, he asked the people to grant him broad new powers under a presidential system that made him largely independent of Parliament and constituted him as the unchallenged ruler of Turkey until 2029.

Fethullah Gülen has lived for decades in the United States. Erdogan has asked the American government to repatriate the Muslim cleric so he can be tried as a terrorist in Turkey—a demand that the American government is not likely to fulfill.

The Islam of Gülen supports democracy and human rights

I am appalled by Erdogan's accusation of Gülen because I am familiar with the work of this Turkish Muslim thinker and educator. I have read all of his writings translated into English and have paid close attention to the international conference on Gülen's ideas and practices held in London in 2007. I am also acquainted with the spiritual and humanitarian orientation of the Gülen Movement. The Turkish sage belongs to a renewal movement in Islam started by Jamal al-Afghani at the end of the 19th century that urged that Muslim societies be reinspired by the Qur'an, be open to the modern sciences, be respectful of responsible citizenship, and be reconciled to the existing religious pluralism. These Muslim thinkers and leaders were faithful to the substance of their faith: they want to be orthodox and modern.

Gülen himself is a thoughtful cleric, a man of prayer, and a passionate educator, for whom Islam is a religion—that is, the worship of God and a way of life, and not a political project, as it is in Iran and Saudi Arabia. He finds in the Qur'an passages that summon Muslims to educate themselves, become productive, assume responsibility for their collective existence, and respect the other religions and their human rights. Gülen himself made formal visits to Pope John Paul II in Rome, to Patriarch Bartholomew I in Istanbul, and received the Chief Rabbi Bakshi Doron of Jerusalem.[2] Influenced by the Sufi tradition in Islam, Gülen holds that Muslims are called by God to engage in dialogue with people everywhere in order to foster peace and reconciliation in the human family.

Canadian Muslims of Turkish origin, inspired by the Gülen Movement, have founded the Intercultural Dialogue Institute, with branches in nine cities of Canada, including Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Calgary, that foster cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation. This is how the Institute describes its aims and activities on its website:

> The Institute aims to promote enduring interfaith and intercultural cooperation, tolerance and dialogue by sharing our differences and similarities in an effort to enhance civil society, to promote the development of human values, and to advance diversity and multiculturalism in the society. The Institute aims to eliminate or reduce false stereotypes, prejudices and unjustified fears through direct human communication.

Persons acquainted with Gülen and the Gülen Movement find Erdogan's accusation of Gülen as insti-

gator of the coup d'état totally absurd. Erdogan plans the crucifixion of an innocent man. That he designates the Gülen Movement a terrorist organization is a falsehood that convinced no one. Turks remember well that, reacting to the violence of Al Qaeda and other jihadist organizations, Fethullah Gülen always insisted that there was no place for terrorism in Islam.

Shocked by Erdogan's groundless accusation, Rabbi Alan Goshen-Gottstein, founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute in Jerusalem, wrote an article defending the Gülen Movement in the *Times of Israel* of July 26, 2016. Here is a paragraph from that article:

> I have been friendly with members of the Gulen Movement for nearly 20 years. I have found in them trusted partners, potential partners and friends, who share a common vision of humanity, religion and values and who, like me, work through interreligious dialogue to achieve this vision. Sometimes it requires a living relationship to give reality to ideals. Friendships with members of the movement that I have enjoyed for nearly 20 years have led me to high esteem for their brand of Islam, for the depth of their humanity and ultimately for their spiritual teacher.

Why does Erdogan hate Fethullah Gülen?

How have political commentators explained the reasons for the groundless accusations of Fethullah Gülen?[3]

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Kemal Atatürk founded modern Turkey as a secular state *(la laïcité)*, excluding Islam from all levels of public life. Political parties based on Islamic values were repeatedly repressed. Beginning in the 1980s, the military, the guardian of *la laïcité*, accused the young Gülen, already a successful preacher of spiritual Islam, of undermining the secularity of the Turkish state. The ongoing legal harassment prompted Gülen in 1999 to exile himself to the US, where he has remained ever since. It is an ironic fact that in 2001, when Erdogan founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP), he regarded Gülen as an ally. His party, based on Islamic values, favoured democracy and pluralism, in line with Gülen's interpretation of Islam. Because the AKP affirmed Turkish democracy, it was allowed to survive. It was in fact soon elected to constitute the Turkish government, with Erdogan as prime minister, a position he held from 2003 to 2014. Gülen himself remained aloof from the AKP and from all political parties. "Political parties come and go," he said, "while Islam remains."

In a television interview, Gülen expressed himself more clearly:

> The politicization of religion is putting religion in a great danger. Because those who identify themselves as representing the religious turn religion into an instrument for their political goals. As they claim to be the representatives of religion in the political sphere, their errors and deficiencies get to be attributed to religion itself, casting a dark shadow over the spirit of the religion.[4]

After Erdogan's election victory of 2011, he began to pressure Fethullah Gülen to support his bid for a presidential system giving him expanded powers. When Gülen refused to support such a presidential system, lacking proper checks and balances, Erdogan began to put pressure on the Gülen Movement that eventually led to the closing of many educational institutions.

In 2013, Erdogan came to look upon Gülen as his enemy. A government corruption scandal involving $100 billion US led to the arrest of prominent personalities, close allies of Erdogan, and accusations in social media claimed that he himself has been involved in these criminal dealings. Erdogan accused Gülen of having initiated the public inquiry to embarrass him and his government. When he became president of Turkey in 2014, he became increasingly hostile of the Gülen Movement because its members working in the press and other mass media acted as government watchdogs, ever uncovering cases of corruption and suppression of human rights. These critics warned that the president was undermining Turkish democracy.

As a matter of fact, Erdogan wanted more power than Turkey's Constitution gave him. He planned to hold a referendum asking the people to support his claim to expanded powers in a presidential system that made him largely independent of parliament. The most effective opposition to this plan was staged by Turkey's ethically committed intellectuals, many of them members of the Gülen Movement. Erdogan saw them as his principal enemy, along with Gülen, who inspired them. To gain popular support and persuade the people to support his referendum, he denounced the intellectual élites, the religious moralists, and the mass media as enemies of the people, stirring up an angry populism indifferent to issues of human rights and freedoms.

President Erdogan used the failed military putsch of July 2016 to get rid of his political opponents. After the rapid defeat of the coup d'état organized by a small military group, Erdogan, without waiting for a proper inquiry, immediately accused his political opponents, especially Gülen and the members of the Gülen Movement, of being the authors of the revolt. He already had a list of 800 people to be arrested immediately, soon to be followed by longer lists of men and women to be dismissed from their jobs or to be arrested as co-conspirators.

Erdogan won the referendum of April 16 by a slight margin. Yet observers in and outside Turkey argue that the result of the referendum is invalid, seeing that the opposition parties were given little space to address the public and that at the end the administration decided, against public law, to accept thousands of non-registered votes. Erdogan now has the power to disregard these legal challenges. He will again demand that the United States repatriate Gülen to be tried by a Turkish court as a traitor of his country, the innocent condemned as guilty.

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1 For more information, visit turkeypurge.com.

2 http://www.journalpioneer.com/opinion/columnists/2016/9/5/fethullah-gulen-on-israel-and-jews-4633101.html (accessed April 24, 2017).

3 See, for instance, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/top-three-reasons-why-turkeys-president-erdogan-is_us_58ab6d74e4b029c1d1f88dc9 (accessed April 24, 2017).

4 Interview with Yalcin Dogan on Kanal D TV in 1997: http://www.ajanshaber.com/fethullah-gulenin-16-yil-onceki-roportaji-haberi/33569 (accessed April 24, 2017).

Book Notes

Attending to Light that Shone in the Darkness

Jean-Pierre Fortin, *Grace in Auschwitz: A Holocaust Christology.*
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016. xxxvi + 279 pp.

In 2006, Jean-Pierre Fortin, assistant professor of Spirituality at the Institute of Pastoral Studies of Loyola University in Chicago, attended a five-day seminar held at the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Present at the seminar were six Holocaust survivors as well as experts in the fields of history, anthropology, and psychology. Previously, Fortin had practised philosophy as a form of technical inquiry. His exposure to Auschwitz led him to repudiate this approach and to ask instead how God was present during the Holocaust. This book is the result of his inquiry.

Fortin begins by briefly discussing how the Holocaust ruptured Western ideals of morality and reason and traditional Christian affirmations of God. These appear meaningless in relation to it. Places like Auschwitz were a world unto themselves, with living conditions so dehumanizing that experiences there are difficult to convey in language. While technical information about the death camps is important, ultimately it is the testimony of the survivors that must be heard. Fortin argues that life in the camps was extremely regimented so as to destroy any dignity and self-worth that the imprisoned possessed. Death was a constant threat. Inmates lived with continual uncertainty, reduced to struggling to survive on a meagre diet, and experienced guilt over their own survival while many others died. Fortin argues that these extreme living conditions starkly illuminated people's need of God to be human and humanity's capacity to be a channel of God's grace. Central to his argument is the observation that even in Auschwitz there were acts of compassion by people who struggled to retain a sense of morality and dignity. Many experienced a loss of explicit faith and spoke of God as absent or silent. Yet even some of these continued to pray. Others experienced a transformation and persistence of faith as a form of resistance against the death camps' dehumanizing regime. Surprisingly, Fortin notes that various forms of faith in God were widespread among Jewish prisoners. But while faith in God was present in Auschwitz, it was deeply marked by the camp. Fortin argues that God was present in the death camps in acts of compassion by prisoners there who were moved, sometimes by faith, to tend to the sufferings of others.[1] Some, like Etty Hillesum, were empowered by God through faith in the crucified Christ. Others were inspired by God's hidden presence.

To relate the Christian message to the testimony of Holocaust survivors, Fortin begins with the experiences of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Alfred Delp, two Christians murdered by the Nazis, who found Christ present to them in their sufferings in imprisonment. He then turns to the kenotic Christologies of Sergius Bulgakov and Hans Urs Von Balthasar, for whom Christ's obedience even in the face of great suffering is the model Christians are to imitate. By doing so, Christians share in Christ's mission and sufferings, and their experiences of affliction can become encounters with God. These Christologies does not bless suffering, but attempt to enable one to find dignity and meaning in the midst of it.

Fortin concludes that Christ can be perceived where people present a compelling witness to God. The God who was present in Auschwitz needed to be made present through people's acts of compassion. At the same time, this God inspired and empowered people to act in this way.

Earlier Jewish and Christian reflections on the Holocaust tended to focus on the enormity of the suffering there and the question of theodicy it raises. Jurgen Moltmann sought to relate Christian faith to this by concentrating on the crucified Jesus and rethinking the presence of God in Jesus' death.[2] More recently, some Jewish and Christian thinkers like Fortin have focused on how acts of compassion and solidarity that happened in places like Auschwitz bore witness to God and made God present there. He argues that even here, where the Holy Spirit was terribly devastated by human sin, it still inspired some people to glorify God by further expressing God's own beauty and goodness in time and space,

in small but highly significant ways. This conclusion of this carefully written book deserves discussion.

Don Schweitzer, St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon

1 A similar argument is made from a Jewish feminist perspective in Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

2 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 267–78.

Churches Helping Churches after the Second World War

Saving Germany: North American Protestant and Christian Mission to West Germany 1945–1974, James C. Enns.
Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017. 308 pp.

Over the last 25 years, McGill-Queen's University Press has published over 100 studies on the history of religions—an extraordinary achievement at a time when universities are reducing the space for the study of religion, following the mood of the secular society. The most recent book in this series is *Saving Germany*, a study of the mission of the North American Protestant churches to Germany after its defeat and the devastation of its cities, a kind of spiritual Marshall Plan, except that the churches began to act in 1945, while the Marshall Plan began only in 1948. In fact, in the early years after the war, a good number of politicians felt that help should be extended not to Germany, but to the countries that had been victims of Germany. Yet the churches started immediately to help German parishes and congregations belonging to their own denomination. The author does not hide that part of the motivation of the churches was building a wall against communism.

Since historians have shown little interest in the massive campaign of the North American churches in Germany, this carefully researched book breaks new ground. Because the Canadian Protestant churches cooperated with the American churches of their denomination, the author always refers to the North American churches.

It is no surprise that the mainline churches and the Evangelical churches interpreted their mission in quite different ways. The mission of the mainline churches was twofold: a) giving witness to their faith in Jesus Christ by acts of charity, offering food, clothing and building materials to the poor, and b) helping the German churches to adjust spiritually and theologically to their new democratic society and to democratize its own internal organization. The North American Protestants felt well equipped to render this service. They encouraged the German Church to make a public confession of its failure under the Nazi regime, a declaration of repentance that merited their reception as a member of the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948.

The author claims that the new understanding of mission prompted the North American churches to rethink their mission on the other continents. Instead of preaching the gospel to covert individuals to the Christian faith, they now want to give witness to their faith by generous acts of charity and, second, to assist the local congregations to improve their pastoral practice and play a more effective role in their society. It is my impression that this new understanding of the Church's mission was already articulated by Christians belonging to the Life and Work Movement founded after the First World War.

The North American Evangelical churches and church groups also offered generous material help to the impoverished German population, yet their main effort was the promotion of Evangelical Christianity in Germany. In addition to the two established German churches—the Protestant Church (mainly Lutheran, called die Evangelische Kirche) and the Catholic Church—there also exist in Germany the so-called free churches (Methodist, Baptist, Mennonite, and several others) that receive no public funds, are located in the margin of society, and are largely ignored by the two established churches. It was through these free churches that the North American Evangelical groups brought to Germany their giant meetings of religious awakening, with country-style music, huge choirs, the latest technology, the forceful sermon aimed at converting the audience, and, at the end, the call to have believers in Jesus come forward and give public witness of their faith.

The author offers a detailed account of the reception of the Evangelical mission in Germany. While the professionally organized meetings attracted very large audiences and gave the free churches a higher profile in German society, these meetings were also severely criticized by mainstream Christians and the secular press for fostering a piety at odds with Germany's religious culture. The book has an entire chapter on Billy Graham's visits to Germany, recording his remarkable successes as well as the critical responses of journalists and theological commentators.

In 1971, the mainstream North American churches brought to an end their German mission. They felt that the German Protestant Church had become a progressive voice in the country. Yet several North American societies of Evangelical preachers, encouraged by the German free churches, continued their mission in Germany. Their pastoral approach is analyzed in the last chapter of the book, prior to the conclusion. We are told that the Evangelical preachers recognized that society had changed, that secularism had become part of the mainstream, and that preaching had to do more than summon people to be converted to Jesus. Preachers now had to critique the dominant secularism. Following the American example, the Evangelical preachers began to engage a culture war, denouncing the spread of secular humanism. The author reports that this preaching was well received in the free churches and greatly increased the number of German Evangelicals (Evangelikale) ready to join the mission and gradually replace the American ministers. Over the years, a conservative Christian movement became stronger, even within the official Church, die Evangelische Kirche, challenging its openness to modernity, its commitment to secular causes like social justice and international peace, and its membership in the World Council of Churches.

This last chapter seems to me incomplete. The author does not tell us who belonged to the Evangelikalen in Germany and, in particular, whether they included the conservative movement, Kein anderes Evangelium, organized within the Evangelische Kirche. More than that, while the previous chapters reported the public criticism of American-sponsored Evangelism in Germany, the final chapter does not mention the theological critique to which the new Evangelical preaching was exposed. According to this critique, the unqualified rejection of secular culture revealed the Evangelical preachers' unwillingness to engage in dialogue with modernity. They refused to learn anything from modern hermeneutics; they were unable to respect the new religious pluralism; and they failed to recognize that implicit in every religious proclamation is a hidden political message.

Despite the limitations of the final chapter, the book makes an important contribution to American and Canadian church history, documenting in detail the churches' mission in the decades after 1945.

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Jean Vanier: In Dialogue with Modernity

Michael W. Higgins, *Jean Vanier: Logician of the Heart.*
Toronto: Novalis, 2016. 122 pp.

This lovely book is part of the series *People of God: Remarkable Lives, Heroes of Faith*, published by Novalis. Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, now a worldwide network of protective homes, fits into this category. In these homes for people with profound disabilities, the helpers, including Vanier himself, live with people with disabilities, become friends with them, and form with them something like a family, even when the disability makes speaking difficult or even impossible. Is such a selfless love humanly possible? Vanier is a philosopher, a university lecturer, an intellectual for whom the exchange of ideas has great importance, yet he felt called by God to extend his love to the weakest, the most broken human beings, children of God trapped in darkness.

I stand in awe of this blessed man and am also troubled by him. His sacrificial life in imitation of Jesus makes me question the validity of my own comfortable existence, in solidarity with the poor in theory, but not sharing their deprivation. We read in Michael Higgins' biography that Jean Vanier explains that his sacrifice of love does not leave him in the dark; instead, he discov-

ers that people with disabilities, even if they are unable to speak, feel gratitude and affection and find gestures to express their love. Life with them is a true exchange. Vanier confesses that they enrich his life.

This biography offers a perceptive account of Jean Vanier's life and thought. It is beautifully written and communicates to the reader the spiritual complexity of this remarkable man of faith. Special in Higgins' account is, in my opinion, his presentation of Vanier's life in its historical context—that is to say, in the decades before and after the Second Vatican Council, a span of time in which the Church opened itself to a new relationship to the world. Vanier's mission embodies the new Catholicism that has emerged in this period. I will mention three approaches showing that Vanier is in dialogue with modernity.

Higgins explains that Vanier's compassion for the weak and the helpless is not simply traditional Catholic charity—not simply the sacrificial love of persons in need. His compassion also has a wider political meaning: it includes solidarity with impoverished and oppressed peoples. Higgins contrasts Mother Teresa's work of selflessly loving and serving poor people with Vanier's awareness that people are made poor by political and economic domination. Vanier has great respect for the option for the poor adopted by the 1968 Medellín Conference of the Latin American bishops. On March 24, 1980, the day Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated in San Salvador, Vanier was in Cholutecca, Honduras. Deeply moved by the event, he was asked to preach in the city's cathedral on the murder of the Archbishop. In a letter quoted by Higgins, Vanier writes, "I am full of admiration for the Church of Latin America which is beginning to flourish in its commitment to the poor, and where there are so many men and women prepared to risk their lives."

For Vanier, the Catholic faith is life committed to love, more than a belief in doctrines. For that reason, he was ready to open L'Arche to the participation of members and helpers who were not Catholics. Already prior to the approval of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation by Vatican II, L'Arche accepted non-Catholics with disabilities and helpers who believed in the same values. In later years, L'Arche became a network of protective homes in countries on all continents, preserving its ethos and spirituality, even if sustained by a different religious tradition.

Helping people with profound disabilities to overcome their isolation and improve their lives is a modern phenomenon. Accidental deformations of nature were no longer seen as providential; instead they were analyzed and attempts were made to correct them. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, disabilities were studied in clinical medical fashion, envisaging the human body as an object to be manipulated and transformed. By contrast, it was sustained reflection on human dignity and human rights that persuaded the United Nations in 1976 to institute an International Year of Disabled Persons. In 1982, the Canadian government decided to include people with disabilities in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and in 2006 the assembly of the United Nations passed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Public buildings, including the churches, are now expected to reconstruct their entries, giving access to persons in wheelchairs or on crutches.

According to Higgins' biography, I conclude, Jean Vanier has been in dialogue with modernity in regard to three themes: the political meaning of charity, the need of interreligious cooperation, and the recognition of the human rights of people with disabilities.

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Leonard Swidler: A Man of Ecumenical Dialogue

Leonard Swidler, *The Age of Global Dialogue*.
Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016. 416 pp.

This is a fascinating book. The author, Leonard Swidler, has been involved in interreligious dialogues for over 50 years. In 1964, he founded the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, and after the Second Vatican Council, in 1978, he founded the Institute for Interreligious Dialogue. His personal involvement in

ecumenical and interreligious dialogues and his commitment to Jewish–Christian reconciliation have led to the publication of a long list of books and articles. Twenty-three of his books are available free of charge on the website http://astro.temple.edu/~swidler/swidler-books/.

Since Swidler did his doctoral research in Germany on the Una Sancta Movement of the 1930s, he has become a mediator of German ecumenical thought and action to North American ecumenists. I wish to mention his *Blood Witness of Peace and Unity*, the biography of the German priest Max Joseph Metzger, a peace activist working in solidarity with Protestants, who was executed for high treason during the war by Hitler's Nazi government. As an American democrat, Swidler has promoted human rights and freedoms in the Catholic Church, and in his book *Towards a Catholic Constitution* he even advocates a regulating legal framework for the exercise of ecclesiastical power. His books and articles are stimulating and thought provoking because he feels free to adopt controversial positions and defend them with learned arguments, while respecting his colleagues who disagree with him. Swidler is above all a man of dialogue.

In the present book, *The Age of Global Dialogue*, Swidler tries to demonstrate a controversial thesis. He is greatly impressed by the emergence of a new self-understanding in the religions of the present world. From seeing themselves as unique bearers of truth and as walled-in communities in competition with one another, the world religions have come to redefine themselves, opening themselves to dialogue with one another, recognizing the values they share in common, and willingly cooperating with one another in the service of the common good. Swidler regards this evolution as an extraordinary event without precedent in human history. To interpret this transformation, he makes use of a category introduced by Hans Küng and speaks of a paradigm shift that has taken place in the world religions. Yet what has happened, Swidler thinks, is even more dramatic. He turns to Karl Jaspers' famous idea of "the Axial Age," referring to the time between the seventh and third century BCE, during which emerged a new human self-understanding, articulated by thinkers and prophets, recognizing personal responsibility beyond tribal loyalty and spiritual values beyond material collective survival. Making use of this idea, Swidler argues that the changed self-understanding of the world religions has introduced a new Axial Age, the Age of Global Dialogue, in which pluri-religious and pluri-cultural humanity seeks reconciliation through dialogue and cooperation in full respect of the differences of the various traditions. Swidler's entire book can be read as a demonstration of this thesis, recording the creativity and transformative impact of the interreligious and intercultural dialogues that have taken place over the last few decades.

Karen Armstrong, the great scholar of the history of religions, also believes that we are living in a new Axial Age, but since she is more aware than Swidler that the cultural and political elites of modern society have become secular and utilitarian, oriented towards worldly success, she thinks that necessary for our survival is a spiritual conversion, an openness to the Divine, a new culture attentive to the needs of the human heart.

Swidler's *The Age of Global Dialogue* can also be read quite differently. He tells us in his Introduction that his first book on interreligious dialogue, *After the Absolute*, was published in 1990, that he expanded this book for a Chinese edition published in 2006, and that the present volume, building upon the two previous publications, includes his research and his dialogical experiences over the last decade. If he retains his strength, he writes—he is now over 80—he will continue his research and may even republish the volume to include his new ideas. His present book, I suggest, can thus be read as a recapitulation of Swidler's scholarly work and his dialogical involvements, a very personal story of matters dear to his heart, of which he recognizes the world-historical significance.

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